

**ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2015**

A Special Meeting of the Enfield Town Council was held at the Parkman School, 165 Weymouth Road, Enfield, Connecticut on Tuesday, February 24, 2015. Chairman Kaupin called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL-CALL – Present were Councilors Arnone, Bosco, Cekala, Deni, Edgar, Kaupin, Lee, Mangini and Stokes. Councilors Hall and Szewczak were absent. Also present were Town Manager, Matthew Coppler; Assistant Town Manager, Derrik Kennedy; Assistant Town Manager of Development Services, Courtney Hendrickson; Director of Community Development, Peter Bryanton

ENFIELD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Present from the Enfield Community Development Corporation (ECDC) were Darren LaMore, Robert LeMay and Peter Bryanton.

Mr. LaMore explained community development corporations were designed to anchor capital in communities by developing residential and commercial properties, ranging from affordable housing to shopping centers and even businesses.

He stated in 2010 the CDC was reformed after nearly 17 years of inactivity.

He reviewed an overview of programs:

- First homebuyer program – three new homeowners purchased a home in Thompsonville and all three are improving their properties quite a bit and are adhering to all the program's requirements.
- Advocacy for the rail has been instrumental

Mr. LaMore stated they acquired 33 North River Street in January, 2014 from the Dow Mechanical Corporation for \$165,000. He noted the environmental surveys and studies are nearly complete. He stated they're surprised they're not finding material, and the cleanup will be minimal if any. He noted they'll have the final Phase III information coming soon. He stated plans for that building include apartments on the top two floors, retail and office space as well as platform and ticket access on the second floor with multi-use space on the first floor along with bus waiting, ticketing and access to the outside. He noted they have drawings, plans and a couple renderings of the building.

He then spoke about the corner of Pearl and High Street. He noted the property was acquired last year, along with the corner of Spring and High Street for \$32,000. He noted the plan is to develop building storefronts on the first floor and apartments above it, similar to the structure that was formerly there. He stated the timeframe is most likely

2016 or 2017. He noted the Department of Housing has good grant programs. He stated it's important to have something on this corner, rather than a parking lot.

Mr. LaMore spoke about the Strand Theater. He noted in January, 2015, they won a grant of \$200,000 to begin a hazardous material survey, engineering study and business feasibility study. He stated this is the first of one of these types of grants, which is being handled by Tim Sullivan, who is in charge of brownfields, riverfronts and transit. He stated the clean up of the Strand will cost a lot more than 33 North River Street. He noted even if that building had to be torn down, they'd still have to do this study. He stated the engineering study will determine whether that building is structurally sound.

He stated they've begun discussions with the current owners of the Strand, which is Save Our Strand. He noted he's not sure how that will go because there are liens on this building, and there might be other issues tied to that building. He stated DECD would like that building to be in someone's hands before they begin anything on it.

Mr. LaMore stated Save Our Strand is not viable at this time, and they are not registered with the state and haven't filed any of their paperwork, therefore, they'd have to file paperwork to reform. He stated there is money in a couple accounts, which now belongs to the Secretary of State, and this would be seed money. He noted if the Town took that building for taxes, getting that money from the Secretary of State would be difficult. He stated it's important that money stays with the Strand because people donated it for that sole purpose.

He stated the long-term goal is to have a facility that hosts meetings and seminars during the day and doubles as an entertainment gathering venue at night. He noted it's important a lot of hours are taken up in that building because they won't make enough money hosting just meetings in that building.

Mr. LaMore stated cleaning up the Strand would be an encouraging sign that Thompsonville is moving forward.

Councilor Lee questioned the amount of seed money, and Mr. LaMore responded he's not sure.

Mr. LaMore stated they have to pace themselves on the Strand building.

Mr. LaMore then reviewed operations of the ECDC as follows:

- In 2014, ECDC sold 8 South Street for \$132,000. He noted they purchased the house for \$101,000 from the Town. He noted it was purchased by a local business owner, who lives in the house.
- Nearly all of the grants the ECDC acquires contain no operating money – it's all development or environmental rehab funding
- As projects are completed, administration dollars are easier to come by.
- ECDC does accept donations.

Councilor Mangini questioned who owns the Strand building, and Mr. LaMore responded Save Our Strand owns the building, and that committee would have to be reformed to determine what they want to do with that building. He added Save Our Strand does not want to own the building. He noted there's an outstanding loan of \$125,000 on the Strand.

Councilor Arnone questioned whether the \$200,000 grant money has to come through the Town, and Mr. LaMore responded no. He added before any money is spent on the Strand, that building should be in the hands of the ECDC or Town of Enfield.

Councilor Edgar stated Save Our Strand owes the Town taxes and over \$100,000 for roof work. He questioned how a grant can be requested for something that's not owned. Mr. LaMore stated ECDC can request the grant, but they can't use the money right now. He noted the thought process was that while that money is available, they thought they'd try to acquire that \$200,000 before someone else does. He stated something has to be done with the Strand in the next few years or it will fall apart.

Mr. Bryanton stated the mission of a CDC is to take over old buildings and do something with them. He noted having a CDC allowed them to buy 33 North River Street.

Mr. LaMore then reviewed the ECDC financial report.

Councilor Arnone spoke about the need for transparency. Mr. LaMore stated documents are on their website.

Mr. Coppler stated there should be some type of annual report that gets into the financials of the organization. He noted this would not just be from a transparency standpoint, but also give confidence to people interested in partnering with the ECDC. He noted this would be a good marketing tool. He stated his belief the problem that ECDC has is that it takes money to do it right. He noted if there's something the Town wants, it's to their advantage to think about some type of funding to help get something done.

Mr. LaMore suggested meeting briefly on a quarterly basis would be helpful. He noted he can email the financial report to everyone.

He then reviewed financial information for the ECDC.

Councilor Edgar questioned what bank is used by the ECDC, and Mr. LaMore responded United Bank. He went on to note the grants they receive are reimbursement grants, which means they have to spend the money first, and they are then reimbursed and the check goes into United Bank.

Councilor Edgar questioned whether ECDC Board minutes are available. Mr. LaMore stated they will be putting the minutes on their website, as well as their agendas.

Councilor Edgar questioned when meetings take place, and Mr. LaMore stated they are supposed to meet every fourth Thursday, and those meetings most likely will be at Scott Bertrand's office at the Housing Authority near the DMV. Mr. Bryanton added Board meetings are not open to the public. Mr. LaMore stated if members of the public wish to come and ask questions, they could entertain that, however, if they need to talk about real estate that would be treated as the Council handles their executive session. He went on to note that if anyone is aware of people who would be valuable on this board, that should be made known.

Councilor Edgar questioned the grant relating to brownfields, and Mr. Bryanton stated the Town got assessment monies for Northeast Utilities and 98 Prospect Street.

Councilor Edgar questioned whether ECDC paid real estate fees when they sold 8 South Street, and Mr. LaMore stated they did because they tried listing this property themselves, but it didn't work.

Councilor Edgar questioned who sold this property for the ECDC, and Mr. LaMore responded Gretchen of Century 21.

Chairman Kaupin stated the financial statement will be forwarded to the Town Council tomorrow. He noted they will talk about setting up a quarterly update.

RECAP OF COUNCIL GOALS

Mr. Coppler distributed a packet which is a recap of Council goals.

Chairman Kaupin suggested everyone read through this. He suggested the Town Manager send this in an email as well.

Mr. Coppler stated this will be updated on a monthly basis.

There was no Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #3045 by Councilor Lee, seconded by Councilor Arnone to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #3045** adopted 9-0-0, and the meeting stood adjourned at 6:55 p.m.